

MINUTES OF THE  
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS  
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

June 18, 2014  
MAG Office, Saguaro Room  
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Mayor Jackie Meck, Buckeye, Chair	Mayor W. J. "Jim" Lane, Scottsdale
Councilmember Jack Sellers, Chandler,	Mr. Joseph La Rue, State Transportation
Vice Chair	Board
Mr. F. Rockne Arnett, Citizens Transportation	* Lt. Governor Stephen Roe Lewis, Gila River
Oversight Committee	Indian Community
Mr. Dave Berry, Swift Transportation	* Mayor Georgia Lord, Goodyear
* Mr. Jed Billings, FNF Construction	* Mayor Mark Mitchell, Tempe
* Mayor Bob Barrett, Peoria	* Mr. Garrett Newland, Macerich
Councilmember Ben Cooper, Gilbert	Mayor Tom Rankin, Florence
Mayor Alex Finter, Mesa	Mayor Greg Stanton, Phoenix
Supervisor Clint Hickman, Maricopa County	* Ms. Karrin Kunasek Taylor, DMB Properties
* Mr. Mark Killian, The Killian	Mayor Jerry Weiers, Glendale
Company/Sunny Mesa, Inc.	Mayor Sharon Wolcott, Surprise

\* Not present

# Participated by telephone conference call

+ Participated by videoconference call

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) was called to order by Chair Jackie Meck, at 12:05 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Meck welcomed Mesa Mayor Alex Finter to his first meeting as a TPC member. Chair Meck introduced Avondale Mayor Kenneth Weise, whose appointment to the TPC is on the June 25, 2014, Regional Council agenda.

Chair Meck announced that the revised agenda that was previously emailed was at each place and on the tables on either side of the room.

Chair Meck requested that members of the public fill out blue cards for Call to the Audience and yellow cards for consent or action items on the agenda. He stated that hearing assisted devices, parking garage validation, and transit tickets for those who purchased transit tickets to attend the meeting were available from staff.

3. Call to the Audience

Chair Meck stated that an opportunity is provided to the public to address the Transportation Policy Committee on items that are not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of MAG, or non action agenda items that are on the agenda for discussion or information only. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. A total of 15 minutes will be provided for the Call to the Audience agenda item, unless the Transportation Policy Committee requests an exception to this limit. Those wishing to comment on agenda items posted for action will be provided the opportunity at the time the item is heard.

Chair Meck recognized public comment from Dr. Marvin Rochelle, who stated that Interstate 11 is one of the most essential new ideas to promote this area and it will encourage more business from Mexico and Canada to come to Arizona. Dr. Rochelle stated that this region needs a representative in Mexico City to increase partnerships and bring more business to the Valley and state. Chair Meck thanked Dr. Rochelle for his comments.

Mayor Sharon Wolcott introduced the new Surprise City Manager, Bob Wingenroth.

Chair Meck presented a plaque to Mayor Greg Stanton for his regional planning efforts on the agreement between the City of Phoenix and the City of Buckeye to create a solar facility over a landfill.

Mayor Greg Stanton expressed that it was an honor to be invited to Buckeye to celebrate a great regional partnership on this significant solar project over the landfill with Buckeye's permission. Mayor Stanton remarked that this project will benefit the citizens of the City of Buckeye with a community park. He added that he would visit Buckeye any time. Mayor Stanton expressed appreciation for the plaque.

Chair Meck thanked Mayor Stanton for coming to the City of Buckeye and noted that this was the first time a Phoenix mayor had officially visited Buckeye. He noted that the funding Buckeye received will build a park. Chair Meck expressed that he felt this project was truly an example of regionalism.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Chair Meck stated that agenda items #4A, #4B, #4C, and #4D were on the consent agenda.

Chair Meck stated that public comment is provided for consent items. He noted that no public comment cards had been received.

Chair Meck asked members if they would like to remove any of the consent agenda items or have a presentation. No requests were noted.

Mayor Georgia Lord moved to recommend approval of agenda items #4A, #4B, #4C, and #4D on the consent agenda. Mayor Jim Lane seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4A. Approval of the May 21, 2014, Meeting Minutes

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, approved the May 21, 2014, meeting minutes.

4B. Arterial Life Cycle Program Status Report December 2013 - April 2014

The Arterial Life Cycle Program Status Report provides detail about the status of projects, revenues, and other relevant program information for the period between December 2013 and April 2014. This is the program's nineteenth status report and second published in Fiscal Year 2014.

4C. MAG Federally Funded, Locally Sponsored Project Development Status Report

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, recommended approval of the MAG Federally Funded, Locally Sponsored Project Development Status Report, of actions that defer, delete, advance, and change projects, and of the necessary amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, and as appropriate, to the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. The MAG Federal Fund Programming Guidelines & Procedures, approved by the MAG Regional Council on October 26, 2011, outline the requirements for local agencies to submit status information on the development of their federally funded projects. The Project Development Status Report focuses mainly on projects funded with suballocated Federal Highway Administration funds (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement, Highway Safety Improvement Program, and regionwide Transportation Alternatives). These projects are programmed to obligate in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015, 2016, and 2017. Also included in the report are Surface Transportation Program projects in Pinal County. The Project Development Status Report identifies the projects that are requesting to be deferred to a later year, to be deleted, or to have funds reprogrammed, and that are projected to obligate based on the schedule submitted. A separate agenda item, Project Changes – Amendment and Administrative Modification to the FY 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and to the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, lists the individual detail of project change line items for the requested amendments and modifications to the FY 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program and the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. The MAG Federally Funded, Locally Sponsored Project Development Status Report, the actions that defer, delete, advance, and change projects, and the necessary amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, and as appropriate, to the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, were recommended for approval by the MAG Transportation Review Committee on May 29, 2014, and on June 11, 2014, by the MAG Management Committee.

4D. Project Changes – Amendment and Administrative Modification to the FY 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, and to the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, recommended approval of amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, and as appropriate, to the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) were approved by the MAG Regional Council on January 29, 2014, and have been modified two times, with the last modification approved May 28, 2014. Since then there is a need to make project changes. Highway project changes are included in Table C. Project clarifications for the Regional Transportation Plan Freeway Program and member agency projects are also included and may require conformity determination. Final approval will be contingent on a finding of conformity. General highway and transit project changes that may require a conformity consultation are included in Table D. The project changes were recommended for approval on May 29, 2014, by the MAG Transportation Review Committee, and on June 11, 2014, by the MAG Management Committee.

5. Draft Fiscal Year 2015 Arterial Life Cycle Program

Mr. John Bullen, MAG staff, presented a report on the Draft Fiscal Year 2015 Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP). Mr. Bullen noted that the ALCP is the financial management tool for the arterial section of the RTP, and is updated annually. Mr. Bullen noted that state statute requires that costs cannot exceed available revenues in the program. Additionally, federal statute requires that the program must show fiscal constraint in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Mr. Bullen provided an overview of the development process for the ALCP. The first step is to update project work schedules and costs. The second step is to update revenue forecasts, and the third step is to adjust reimbursements as needed.

Mr. Bullen explained that project workbooks were distributed to all agencies in February 2014. He noted that the lead agencies provided updated project costs and schedules. Then, MAG analyzed the updated cost schedules and projects and adjusted reimbursements accordingly. Mr. Bullen stated that six project change requests were reviewed and recommended for approval by the MAG Street Committee. Mr. Bullen noted that multiple project change requests were heard at the MAG Street Committee this year.

Mr. Bullen informed the committee that Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) revenue forecasts have increased by approximately \$2.5 million from FY 2012 to FY 2013, but that federal revenue forecasts fell from FY 2012 to FY 2013, and again from FY 2013 to FY 2014. The decreased forecast represents about five percent of the federal program. Mr. Bullen noted that from FY 2015 to FY 2020, there is a surplus projected for the ALCP, but that projections indicate a deficit in the ALCP after FY 2020. He noted that this is predicated on the federal transportation bill, which expires September 30, 2014.

Mr. Bullen explained that due to the long-term deficit, continuing the temporary elimination of program inflation and bonding is proposed for FY 2015. He said that no program rebalancing is needed due to the variance of federal revenues, which is predicated on the expiration of MAP-21 on September 30, 2014. Mr. Bullen stated that near-term advancements were made consistent with the priorities established in the May 28, 2014, ALCP Policies and Procedures. He said that the FY 2017 to FY 2020 fund balance will be maintained to help mitigate any further decreases in federal revenues.

Mr. Bullen noted that after near-term advancements to match work schedules, the fund balance is maintained from FY 2017 to FY 2020, which will help offset any losses if a new federal transportation bill reduces revenues.

Mr. Bullen stated that the Draft FY 2015 Arterial Life Cycle Program continues the elimination of program inflation and bonding, is consistent with the programming principles in the ALCP Policies and Procedures, as approved May 28, 2014, and maintains a conservative approach while meeting near-term needs. Mr. Bullen stated that staff will continue to monitor changes in the federal transportation program.

Chair Meck thanked Mr. Bullen for his report and asked members if they had questions.

Mr. Dave Berry asked for clarification of the term “negative fund balance.”

Mr. Bullen explained that it represents the programmed reimbursements compared to the revenue coming into the program. He noted that beyond year 2021, funding commitments exceed the anticipated revenue, which he added, is predicated on the current federal transportation funding bill.

Mr. Eric Anderson noted that there has been a lot of discussion in Congress recently on finding more revenue to fund transportation. He added that this issue will be monitored closely this summer. Mr. Anderson stated that Congress needs to take action or the Highway Trust Fund is projected to be in a negative balance in August. He stated that the ALCP will have a \$38 million negative balance at the end of the program, and only a small increase in revenue would be needed to deal with the deficit because the ALCP is a \$1.5 billion program. Mr. Anderson added that the ALCP will be kept as it is because of the uncertainty of federal funding. He said they do not want to go through the exercise of deferring projects and then having to add them back into the program if higher revenue is forthcoming as they anticipate. He indicated that if Congress does not take action, the TPC might need to discuss adjustments to the ALCP. Mr. Anderson stated that the ALCP is in balance until 2020, which provides time to work on this.

Mr. Dennis Smith stated that he spoke to an aide to the Nevada Governor at an event the evening before. The aide has spoken to Senator Harry Reed who indicated that a short term fix to the budget is being discussed for this session, and a long term fix is being discussed for the lame duck session.

Mr. Joseph La Rue moved to recommend approval of (1) the draft FY 2015 Arterial Life Cycle Program and (2) amendments and administrative modifications to the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan and the FY 2014-2018 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, as appropriate. Mayor Greg Stanton seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

6. Update on the US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization, Access Management Plan, and Systems Study (COMPASS)

Mr. Bob Hazlett, MAG staff, provided an update on the US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization, Access Management Plan, and System Study (COMPASS). He noted that the study has been underway for approximately 22 months and the last report he provided to the TPC was in May 2013. Mr. Hazlett stated that four different concepts for the corridor were studied.

Mr. Hazlett stated that seven of the ten project tasks in the COMPASS project have been completed, and the last three tasks are underway. He noted that the planning partners along the corridor are El Mirage, Glendale, Maricopa County, Peoria, Phoenix, Surprise, and Youngtown. Mr. Hazlett added that some recommendations from the study are ready to be shared and he reported that the study is anticipated to conclude in the fall of 2014.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the four alternatives, which were presented to the TPC in May 2013, include continuing planning improvements from the Regional Transportation Plan, reconsidering the US-60 Grand Avenue Expressway option that was identified in the 1980s, planning for commuter rail with operational improvements, and identifying other high capacity transit options with US-60 enhancements.

Mr. Hazlett stated that an alternatives screening was conducted and it included data on residences and workplaces along the corridor obtained from the Trip Reduction Program to determine travel patterns. The alternatives screening also incorporated MAG's modeling results (called select link analysis), information from the corridor partners, travel demand, safety, reliability, accessibility, economic opportunity, investment need, and corridor vision.

Mr. Hazlett noted that the expressway concept was dismissed based on the alternatives screening results. He explained that the expressway concept would eliminate all private property access, and would likely exceed a cost of \$2.5 billion. Mr. Hazlett stated that the concept of other high capacity transit, such as light rail or fixed guideway with US-60 enhancements, also was dismissed as an option. He noted that considering factors such as cost and work patterns, etc., commuter rail makes more sense as a long term goal.

Mr. Hazlett stated that a COMPASS Framework, a blend of the two remaining concepts, was developed. He said that the Framework includes projects contained in the Regional Transportation Plan, such as improvements to three intersections between Loop 303 and Loop 101 and improvements to three intersections between Loop 101 and downtown Phoenix. He said that the COMPASS Framework includes a corridor-wide Access Management System. Mr. Hazlett noted that there are approximately 427 driveways along the corridor, and the goal was to make

improvements to, but not restrict or compromise private property access to the corridor. He stated that the COMPASS Framework also includes addressing remaining bottlenecks and congestion points, and continue to plan for commuter rail with operational improvements.

Mr. Hazlett described the corridor optimization process, which includes identifying additional traffic interchanges or grade separations at up to nine locations to optimize traffic flow. He said that one area of concern is the segment of Grand Avenue between 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thunderbird Road in Sun City, where the traffic volume is projected to be 90,000 cars per day by 2035, even taking into account the construction of Northern Parkway. He noted how this 90,000 volume is equivalent to Loop 101 volumes today and suggested how congested that corridor would be if there were traffic signals on that freeway. He said that area stakeholders were consulted and they came up with a solution to eliminate traffic signals along this stretch of US-60 by introducing additional grade separations and traffic interchanges to meet travel demand. Mr. Hazlett stated that this could take a long time to construct.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the Access Management Plan was a lengthy effort that included eight or nine workshops with cities, the county, and property owners. He stated that the Access Management Plan would reduce the number of driveways from 427 to 176, a significant boost safety-wise. Mr. Hazlett explained that 89 of these 176 driveways are private property access and the remainder is access for streets. He noted the importance of the Access Management Plan being implemented over time as redevelopment occurs. Mr. Hazlett stated that the team is developing an overlay zoning that cities could adopt to avoid situations that could pit one agency against another. He acknowledged the expertise of world renowned expert Mr. Phil Demosthenes on the Access Management Plan.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the systems planning and implementation portion of the study is underway. They are working on completing the committed highway projects for Grand Avenue funded by Proposition 400, such as Bell Road and Thunderbird Road/Thompson Ranch; recognizing the near-term funding shortfall for Regional Transportation Plan projects in Phase V, amounting to approximately \$500 million to \$600 million; coordinating efforts on nearer-term light rail projects for Phoenix and Glendale under consideration for Federal Transit Administration funding; and accommodating ideas for a long term commuter rail or high capacity transit project for incorporation into the corridor.

Mr. Hazlett stated that 200-300 people have been sent announcements for workshops that will be held on June 23 in Glendale, and on June 24 in Surprise. He said that comments received at the workshops will be provided to the technical teams and then engage the partners. Mr. Hazlett stated that he anticipates presenting the study recommendations to the TPC and Regional Council in the fall of 2014.

Chair Meck thanked Mr. Hazlett for his report and asked members if they had questions.

Mr. Roc Arnett asked about commuter rail. Mr. Hazlett replied that this study was to not preclude any option for the corridor that could happen in the future. He said that grade separations and access management improvements will optimize commuter rail in the future.

Mr. Arnett asked if additional right-of-way would be needed or could they coordinate with BNSF. Mr. Hazlett replied that the COMPASS recommendations were meant to accommodate improvements within the existing rights-of-way for US-60 and not impede the railroad or private property access.

Mayor Jim Lane asked for clarification about the \$2.5 billion cost for the expressway concept. He asked if this sum was to acquire right-of-way or eliminate access from 427 driveways to 176. Mr. Hazlett explained that having an expressway option would turn Grand Avenue into a loop freeway and no private property access would be allowed. He added that the cost to accomplish this is estimated at \$2.5 billion. Mr. Hazlett stated that the expressway concept would also preclude a lot of land use and economic development activity. He stated that the current 150-foot corridor width would need to expand to 300 to 400 feet, and would wipe out significant sections of downtown Glendale and Peoria. Mr. Hazlett stated that eliminating the driveways was included in the other figure for improvements he provided, He noted that the \$500 million to \$600 million cost would identify property access and access management rights, and instead of spending \$2.5 billion for a freeway, they would spend half a billion dollars for an optimized corridor that does not preclude multimodal opportunities.

Mayor Lane asked for clarification that Mr. Hazlett was saying that the corridor could be improved, it could accommodate economic development, and \$2 billion would be saved. Mr. Hazlett replied yes.

Mr. Berry asked if a bridge design or other improvements to accommodate commuter rail would leave a spot to accommodate rail in the overpass or would that be funded and constructed when rail projects occur. Mr. Hazlett replied that it is assumed that commuter rail would remain within the BNSF right-of-way and that freight operations would continue in the corridor, which means that grade separations would be required if there was commuter rail or not. Mr. Hazlett stated that the recommendations for Grand Avenue ensure bridging approaching roadways over the BNSF and any potential commuter rail within BNSF right-of-way.

Mayor Wolcott asked if there was any discussion that BRT would be included as an option. Mr. Hazlett replied that the study findings do not preclude BRT operation as an option in the corridor and they enhance commuter rail. He added that all of the information has been shared with Valley Metro as they begin their BRT study.

Mayor Wolcott expressed her appreciation for reducing the number of driveways to 176 along the corridor. She said it could be a major accomplishment if realized. Mr. Hazlett noted that they are working on institutional arrangements and policies that cities could enact.



Supervisor Clint Hickman remarked on utilizing lineage, signs, and painting along the corridor to reduce costs. He asked if there was any thought as these driveways are eliminated to using the right lane as a low speed lane to not only aid drivers with ingress and egress, but also to help businesses. Mr. Hazlett stated that they are currently working with ADOT and FHWA on a new signage plan for Grand Avenue that would reflect its unique role. He said that there can be confusion because drivers see the large green signs that indicate a freeway, but Grand Avenue is not a freeway. Mr. Hazlett stated that they are working on signage to improve drivers' experiences and eliminate confusion using the corridor.

Supervisor Hickman stated that there are so many West-Siders who grew up around Grand Avenue and most people understand there are cut ins in the far right lane and do not drive in that lane. He added that training could be beneficial to drivers and could help avoid jeopardizing businesses.

Mayor Wolcott stated that looking at BRT does not interrupt the vision of commuter rail and is actually a precursor to commuter rail to determine whether ridership would exist.

#### 7. Legislative Update

Mr. Nathan Pryor, MAG staff, provided an update on legislative issues of interest. He said that a provision in the current federal transportation legislation, MAP-21, requires that metropolitan planning organizations that serve as a transit management area include a public transit representative on their boards by October 1, 2014. Mr. Pryor noted that guidance by the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration has been published in the Federal Register. He added that staff is working on the implementation process and will be bringing it back at a future date, likely a September timeframe. Mr. Pryor requested that members contact him if they have ideas on an approach or if they have questions.

Chair Meck thanked Mr. Pryor for his report and asked if there were questions from the committee.

Mayor Wolcott asked if Mr. Pryor could provide an idea of the implementation process. Mr. Pryor replied that they will have discussions with the transit provider to determine their expectations and to research changes that would be required to MAG materials, such as the By-Laws, memoranda of understanding, policies and procedures, documents, etc., where MAG's representation is described.

Mayor Wolcott asked the anticipated timeframe. Mr. Pryor replied that action by the Regional Council in September is anticipated to comply with the October 1 date, and the new transit representative could be seated at the October Regional Council meeting.

#### 8. Request for Future Agenda Items

Topics or issues of interest that the Transportation Policy Committee would like to have considered for discussion at a future meeting were requested.

No requests were noted.

9. Comments from the Committee

An opportunity was provided for Transportation Policy Committee members to present a brief summary of current events. The Transportation Policy Committee is not allowed to propose, discuss, deliberate or take action at the meeting on any matter in the summary, unless the specific matter is properly noticed for legal action.

Vice Chair Jack Sellers presented Chair Jackie Meck with a Resolution of Appreciation that had been prepared in recognition of his service as Chair of the Transportation Policy Committee.

Chair Meck expressed his appreciation for the acknowledgment and remarked that it had been his pleasure to serve.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

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Chair

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Secretary